

sex talk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

wildfact

Stop by the Campus Health tent on the UA Mall at Homecoming for some FREE popcorn, water and Eegees!

Q How are the birds and the bees associated with sex?

A. Ah, the “birds and the bees.” This phrase is often used by parents if and when they decide to talk to their children about sex and reproduction. Discrete language surrounding “sex” is more acceptable in many families and cultures.

Relating sex to nature shows that sex is a natural thing to do – even the “birds and the bees” do it. But why were these specific creatures chosen? Here’s one idea: birds and bees are familiar to people all over the world. Birds lay eggs, an example of female ovulation, and bees pollinate flowers, an example of fertilization. Another reason why birds were chosen is that they’re monogamous (for at least a season) and have mating rituals.

Where did the euphemism “birds and the bees” originate? Some say it began in literature in 1825. A poet named Samuel Coleridge wrote *Work Without Hope* with the lines, “all nature seems at work...the bees are stirring – birds are on the wing...and I the while, the sole unbusy thing, not honey make, nor pair, nor build, nor sing.”

In 1928, Cole Porter, a jazz musician, wrote

the song “Let’s Do It, Let’s Fall in Love,” with the chorus, “And that’s why birds do it, bees do it. Even educated fleas do it. Let’s do it, let’s fall in love.”

In 1929, *The Charleston Gazette*, a West Virginia newspaper, published an article which directly related the birds and the bees to sex. “...It [sex] was whispered about, but never mentioned in public. Curious and unafraid, we looked into sex and found it perfectly natural, in the flowers and the trees, the birds and the bees.”

“The Birds and the Bees,” a popular 1960s song, opens with “Let me tell you ‘bout the birds and the bees. And the flowers and the trees. The moon up above. And a thing called love.”

We may never know the origin of the phrase, but we do know it will continue to be one of the most widely used metaphors for sex in songs, literature, and everyday language.



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